(b) the reasons for the delay in the process, indicating the progress, so far, made in giving effect to this Act, enacted seven years ago?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 enforced since February, 1996, provides for affirmative action and protective provisions aimed at social, educational and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities. This requires a multi-sectoral collaborative approach of all Ministries of the Central Government, the State Governments and other appropriate authorities. Action to implement various provisions of the act is an ongoing process.

In order to ascertain the population of persons with disabilities, data on disability was collected through Census 2001 and is under compilation. The National Sample Survey Organisation is conducting a survey on disability in the 58th round during the period July-December, 2002. Besides, some States have also carried out complete survey, district-wise, to identify persons with disabilities. A special drive for setting up Medical Boards in States/Union Territories has also been launched for issue of disability certificates. Medical Boards have been set up in 398 districts in 22 States/UTs for issue of certificate of disability.

The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has been appointed to safeguard rights and facilities made available to person with disabilities and also to look into complaints with respect of deprivation of such rights. Also, all States have set up similar authorities in the States.

Recommendations of Gujarat Government on welfare of handicapped

575. DR. A. K. PATEL : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recommendations from the State Government of Gujarat for the welfare of handicapped have been pending with Government for the last two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when these cases are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Procedure of child adoption

576. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of Non-Governmental Organisations have pointed out that existing procedures of child adoption in the country are faulty leading to child trafficking; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Proposal for OBC status to Muslims in Assam

577. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Assam is considering a proposal to grant all the Muslims in the State the status of Other Backward Classes (OBC's);

(b) if so, whether Government have received any formal proposal from the Government of Assam in this behalf; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Govt. of Assam is examining whether the prevailing socio-economic condition and the educational backwardness of the Muslims justify them to be included in the State List of Backward Classes. The Supreme Court in its judgment delivered on 16-11-1992 in the case of Indira Sawhney and others *Vs.* Union of India and others directed the